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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON LEBANON, PALESTINIAN GOVERNANCE

Editorial Commentary on Lebanon

-- "Nasrallah as he raises concern and brings reassurance at the same time"

Columnist Oraib Rantawi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Ad-Dustour (09/24): "Hassan Nasrallah glowed as he debated with his domestic and foreign adversaries. He sent many messages to all those who are interested in reading. He set the limits on attempts to expand the UNIFIL's jurisdiction; he drew the strategy of the relationship between the army and the resistance; he warned of playing with the fire of sectarianism and religion.... Hassan Nasrallah raised concern and brought reassurance all at the same time. He was reassuring to his public and his allies and he raised the concern of his adversaries.... 'Al-Sayyed' [aka Hassan Nasrallah] spoke as a leader whose leadership transcended the borders of Lebanon and extended into the Arab and Muslim worlds.... Hassan Nasrallah has taken once again the reins of the political initiative in Lebanon."

-- "How do we read Nasrallah's speech?"

Columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back-page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (09/24): "Hassan Nasrallah is the Sayyed [master/leader] with all the meaning of that word for the Shiites of Lebanon and he is a victorious hero in the eyes of the Arab people in general. This is a fact, but this does not conceal the fact that he is a politician who represents interests and who works according to calculations within the contexts of the internal Lebanese formula and the regional formulas with a depth and influence that is incomparable with any other Lebanese team. It is no coincidence that he spoke a great deal with glorification and veneration about the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine but completely ignored it in Iraq.... We have listened carefully to the Sayyed's speech before his massive audience trying to pick up every meaning and every indication, because we are very concerned about Lebanon, and because the Sayyed holds the key to calm or escalation, to crisis or breakthrough. We were very relieved to hear him say that the civil war and sectarian strife is a red line not to be crossed, and that the resistance's weapon will never be used internally. Yet, we became alert and fearful when he said that the provocations of others are no longer tolerable. From these words and sentences, the feeling of threat and intimidation were more than worrying."

Editorial Commentary on Palestinian Governance

-- "Need for unity and support"

Centrist, elite English daily Jordan Times editorial opines (09/24):

"It is an almost impossible situation for Abbas, and it is a situation that has been made all the harder by the international community's intransigence. But Abbas needs support, and the only place that support can come from is the Arab world, especially Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Abbas needs support to do the right thing. And that can only mean continuing to honor the democratically-expressed wishes of the Palestinian people. In other words, unless convinced otherwise, Hamas must stay in government, and Fatah must accept that. Arab countries can help persuade the West of the unavailability of this if a peaceful resolution to the present Hamas-Fatah tension is to be found. Hamas could, months ago, have stood down for the sake of the Palestinian people, retained its prominent position in parliament and worked to influence policy from there, without having to change any of its policies and without losing face. It didn't and the moment passed. Hamas now needs to act with imagination. It could temporarily suspend some of its positions in view of future events, for example. It could provide a provisional recognition of Israel, that, should Israel reciprocate, could be extended and perhaps made final. There are options. But for any of these options to bear fruit, the West must be persuaded that Hamas is open to compromise but not pressure and that laying only the foundations for civil war serves no one. Arab countries, whatever their misgivings about Hamas, must use their good offices in Washington to this effect."

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